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Art Unit: 2131

In the Claims:

1. (cancelled)

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (cancelled)

5. (cancelled)

6. (Previously Amended) A method of providing security against unauthorized access to internal resources of a network device comprising:

receiving a digital signature at a security association manager (SAM);

said SAM requesting a de-encryption code;

said SAM de-encrypting said digital signature with said de-encryption code;

said SAM authenticating said de-encrypted digital signature;

said SAM requesting allowed operations associated with said authenticated signature;

a policy server receiving said request for allowed operations associated with said authenticated signature;

said policy server comparing said authenticated signature with information stored on said policy server; and

said policy server sending a response to said SAM indicating an access level corresponding to said authenticated signature.

7. (Original) A method of providing security according to Claim 6 further comprising:

said policy server authenticating said request for allowed operations associated with said authenticated signature prior to comparing said authenticated signature with said information stored on said policy server.

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8. (cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (cancelled)

12. (Previously Amended) Apparatus for providing security against unauthorized access to internal resources of a network device comprising:

a security association manager (SAM) configured to receive a digital signature;
wherein said SAM is configured to send a message including a portion of said digital signature;

wherein said message includes a request for an encryption decoder;

wherein said SAM is further configured to receive a response to said message; and

wherein said SAM is configured to send a digitally signed message requesting an access level for program code associated with said digital signature, in response to receiving said response message;

a policy server configured to receive said request for allowed operations associated with said authenticated signature;

said policy server including a comparison device configured to compare said authenticated signature with information stored on said policy server; and

said policy server being configured to send a response to said SAM indicating an access level corresponding to said authenticated signature.

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

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16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

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18. (Previously Amended) Apparatus for providing security against unauthorized access to internal resources of a network device comprising:

means for receiving a digital signature including an encryption code;

means for accessing a de-encryption code in electrical communication with said means for receiving; and

means for determining allowed operations associated with said digital signature; and

means for receiving a downloadable filing including said digital signal and assigning an access level to a java thread.